



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/578,184	05/04/2006	Tadahiro Ohmi	28995US26X PCT	8419
22850	7590	04/30/2009	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.			DHINGRA, RAKESH KUMAR	
1940 DUKE STREET				
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1792	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			04/30/2009	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

patentdocket@oblon.com
oblonpat@oblon.com
jgardner@oblon.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/578,184	Applicant(s) OHMI ET AL.
	Examiner RAKESH K. DHINGRA	Art Unit 1792

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 03 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If no period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 February 2009.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-11 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-11 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 04 May 2006 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/146/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-10 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection as explained hereunder.

Applicant has amended claims 1, 3 by adding new limitations, e.g. in claim1 new limitation "cooling medium mixer configured to mix the cooling gas and mist into the cooling medium and supply the cooling medium to the cooling medium channel of the process gas supply part" has been added. Further applicant has added new claim 11.

Accordingly claims 1-11 are now pending and active.

New reference by Petvai et al (US 6,053,984) when combined with Ohmi et al reads on limitation of amended claim 1. Accordingly claims 1, 2, 11 have been rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as explained below. Further, new reference by Harano et al (US 2003/0126872) when combined with Ohmi et al reads on limitation of amended claim 3. Accordingly claims 3-6 have been rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as explained below. Balance claims 7-10 have also been rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as explained below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1, 2, 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohmi et al (US PGPUB 2003/0178144) in view of Petvai et al (US 6,053,984).

Regarding Claim 1: Ohmi et al teach a plasma apparatus comprising:
a processing vessel 11 having a holder 13 holding a substrate 12 to be processed;
a microwave antenna 20 provided on the processing vessel so as to oppose the substrate to be processed; and
a processing gas supply part 31 provided between the substrate to be processed on the holder 13 and the microwave antenna 20 so as to oppose the substrate to be processed,
the process gas supply part 31 has a plurality of first openings 31A through which plasma formed in the processing vessel passes, a process gas channel 31B connectable to a process gas source, a plurality of second openings 31D communicating with the process gas channel. Ohmi et al also teach a cooling medium channel 31e in the processing gas supplying part 32 through which a coolant flows to enable provide proper temperature of the process gas (e.g. Figs. 3 -5, 11 and para. 0049-0051, 0062-0070, 122).

Ohmi et al do not teach a cooling medium mixer configured to mix the cooling gas and mist into the cooling medium and supply the cooling medium to the cooling medium channel of the process gas supply part.

Petvai et al teach a semiconductor processing apparatus comprising a processing chamber 24 and further including a cooling medium mixer 43 that provides a mist of water droplets in nitrogen gas and the mixture (cooling medium) is supplied to a cooling medium channel 26 for cooling of substrate 21, to enable obtain required temperature for further processing by HF mist supplied from mist generator 33 (e.g. Fig. 4 and col. 5, line 7 to col. 6, line 45). It would be obvious to provide a cooling medium mixer for supplying a cooling medium including a mixture of cooling gas and mist as per teaching of Petvai et al, and supply the cooling medium into the coolant channel of the process gas supplying part, in the apparatus of Ohmi et al to enable control temperature of the process gas.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skills in the art at the time of the invention to provide a cooling medium mixer for supplying a cooling medium including a mixture of cooling gas and mist as taught by Petvai et al in the apparatus of Ohmi et al to enable supply the coolant into the cooling medium channel and control temperature of the process gas.

Regarding Claim 2: Claim limitations regarding cooling medium including SF6 pertain to contents of apparatus during intended operation of the apparatus and is not considered to add patentable weight.

In this regard courts have ruled:

Expressions relating the apparatus to contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining patentability of the apparatus claim. Ex parte Thibault, 164 USPQ 666, 667 (Bd. App. 1969).

Regarding Claim 11: Petvai et al teach the cooling medium mixer comprises a mixing part 72 and a mist generating and carrier gas (mist source) 76, the mist source configured to generate mist by atomizing supplied water (Figs. 4, 5 and col. 6, line 58 to col. 7, line 43).

Claims 3, 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohmi et al (US PGPUB 2003/0178144) in view of Harano et al (US 2003/0126872).

Regarding Claims 3, 4: Ohmi et al teach all limitations of the claim including process gas introducing part with a cooling medium channel 31e in the processing gas supplying part 32 through which a coolant flows to enable provide proper temperature of the process gas (e.g. Figs. 3 -5, 11 and para. 0049-0051, 0062-0070, 122).

Ohmi et al do not teach a cooling medium circulator circulating the cooling medium is connected to the cooling medium channel and configured to circulate the cooling medium, the cooling medium circulator including a compressor configured to compress the cooling medium and a reserve tank that retains the compressed cooling medium.

However use of a heat exchanger (circulator) with compressor and tank for circulating the cooling medium is known in the art as per reference cited hereunder.

Harano et al teach a wafer processing apparatus comprising a circulator connected to a cooling medium channel 21 and configured to circulate a cooling medium, and that includes a compressor 26 configured to compress the cooling medium and a tank 22 (reserve tank) that circulates (includes retains) the compressed cooling medium as per temperature and flow requirements (e.g. Fig. 1 and para. 0022 – 0034). It would be obvious to provide a cooling

medium circulator as per teaching of Harano et al in the apparatus of Ohmi et al to control temperature of the process gas supplying part, to enable control temperature of the process gas.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skills in the art at the time of the invention to provide a circulator for circulating a cooling medium as taught by Harano et al in the apparatus of Ohmi et al to control temperature of the process gas supplying part, to enable control temperature of the process gas.

Regarding Claim 4: Harano et al teach the circulator includes heat exchangers 25, 29 for cooling the cooling fluid (Fig. 1 and para. 0022).

Regarding Claims 5, 6: Applicant has invoked 35 USC 112, 6th paragraph in respect of claim limitations –“ cooling medium control means” for which the applicant’s disclosed structure includes a mass flow controller /variable conductance valve 55 (Fig. 7 and page 23, line 10 to page 25, line 15). Further, regarding claim limitation “temperature measurement means” 35 USC 112, 6th paragraph is not considered to be invoked since applicant has not disclosed any specific structure for temperature measurement means 57.

Harano et al teach the cooling medium circulator includes a temperature sensor 23, a temperature controlling device 34 and a coolant medium flow rate controlling device 40 such that flow rate of cooling medium is controlled based upon sensed temperature (Harano et al – Fig. 1 and para. 0025-0032).

Claims 7, 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohmi et al (US PGPUB 2003/0178144) in view of Harano et al (US 2003/0126872) as applied to claims 3-6 and further in view of Paganessi (US 5,660,047).

Regarding Claims 7, 8: Ohmi et al in view of Harano et al teach all limitations of the claim except the cooling medium control means is a pressure control means for controlling pressure of the cooling medium.

Applicant has invoked 35 USC 112, 6th paragraph in respect of claim limitations – “cooling medium control means” for which the applicant’s disclosed structure includes a mass flow controller /variable conductance valve 55 (Fig. 7 and page 23, line 10 to page 25, line 15).

Paganessi teaches a plasma apparatus comprising a cooling control means that includes pressure control means 40 that controls 14, 16, 24, 26 etc based on input from pressure sensors P and temperature sensors T (e.g. Fig. 1 and col. 4, lines 46-55). Though Paganessi do not explicitly teach that the temperature control means controls temperature of process gas supplying device it would be obvious to provide the same for obtaining temperature control of process gas supplying part based on the temperature measured by the temperature measurement means.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skills in the art at the time of the invention to provide pressure control as the cooling medium control means as taught by Paganessi in the apparatus of Ohmi et al in view of Harano et al as a known alternate means to control temperature of the process gas supplying part.

In this regard courts have ruled:

The selection of a known material based on its suitability for its intended use is prima facie obviousness. *Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp.*, 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945).

Regarding Claim 8: Claim limitation pertaining to pressure of the cooling medium channel being set to 0.2 – 1 MPa is a functional limitation and since the apparatus of prior art meets the structural limitations of the claim, the same is considered capable of meeting the functional limitation.

In this regard courts have ruled:

Claims directed to apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. *In re Danly*, 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 528, 531 (CCPA 1959). Apparatus claims cover what a device is, not what a device does *Hewlett-Packard Co. V. Bausch & Lomb Inc.*, 15USPQ2d 1525, 1528 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

Regarding Claims 9, 10: Claim limitations wherein the cooling medium includes a cooling gas and mist, and the cooling medium includes SF6 pertain to contents of apparatus during intended operation of the apparatus and is not considered to add patentable weight.

In this regard courts have ruled:

Expressions relating the apparatus to contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining patentability of the apparatus claim. Ex parte Thibault, 164 USPQ 666, 667 (Bd. App. 1969).

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to RAKESH K. DHINGRA whose telephone number is (571)272-5959. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 -6:00 (Monday - Friday).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Parviz Hassanzadeh can be reached on (571)-272-1435. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Rakesh K Dhingra/
Examiner, Art Unit 1792

/Karla Moore/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1792